MATWATCH

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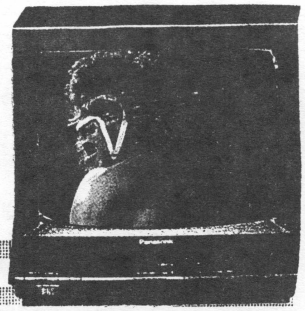

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In Memphis Marathon

SAME OLD KING: LAWLER BESTS IDOL TO RECAPTURE USWA CHAMPIONSHIP

MEMPHIS----Rallying from a double stuff piledriver in the semifinal by Terry Funk and Eddie Gilbert and a heel turn in the finale, Jerry Lawler won the USWA "unified" world heavyweight title for a fifth time Oct. 8 at the Mid-South Coliseum before 2,600. The show, drawing a 1990 Memphis high of $21,000, lasted a record five hours and 15 minutes.

Lawler, who drew an opening-round bye, defeated Mean Mark Callous by disqualification, pinned Dick Slater, won over Terry Funk by DQ and, thanks to an unintended assist from Funk and Gilbert, defeated Idol in seven minutes of the championship finals to take the belt. Lawler survived eight Idol two-counts in the finale.

Idol, as total babyface in earlier rounds, knocked off Gary Young, John Tatum, and Gilbert (who tempted Idol with a hilarious Monty Hall angle), grabbed the house mike before the title bout and insisted to Lawler he wanted a "clean wrestling match." At the handshake, Idol booted Lawler in the gut and began a five-minute pummeling, which included two clotheslines, a neckbreaker and a Russian leg sweep among several finishing attempts. Lawler, who sold the Funk/Eddie piledriver effects throughout the early match, dropped his strap at 5:41 and began a major rally. Lawler pounded Idol until Austin was shoved into ref Jerry Calhoun. Gilbert and Funk dashed to the ring and as Idol held Lawler, Jerry ducked and the Funk/Gilbert combo double clotheslined Austin. Calhoun recovered to count the final three at 7:00 for the Lawler championship win.

But the post-match was much more intense. The three heels destroyed Lawler and combined for a triple stuff piledriver, after which Gilbert counted three. Eddie and Terry then planted boots, with Idol's aid, until Jeff Jarrett ran in. Jarrett scored a brief rally on Idol and Gilbert (while Funk was popping a whip to Lawler in the opposite corner). But Terry kneed Jarrett in the back and the three-on-two melee was a Funk devotee's delight. Lawler's shoe was tied to the ringpost and the three pounded him until he rolled off the ring apron. Jarrett was handled similarly. Gilbert, about to enter a feud vs. Jarrett, posted Jeff. Idol and Funk threw Lawler into the rail, then Idol slammed Lawler onto a table while Funk began to choke Jerry with his branding iron. Gilbert wrapped a double chair around Jarrett's neck and after an exhausting seven-minute brawl, Funk, Gilbert and Idol departed to an intense chorus of boos from the ringside and loge levels and overwhelming cheers from the upper deck. MATCH RATING: PILEDRIVER...primarily for the post-match, which is a keeper. I don't know how much of it will make the USWA show on the weekend of Nov. 17 but have your tapes ready for that one.

SEMIFINALS

IDOL D. GILBERT: Highlight was Eddie's comical LET'S MAKE A DEAL offer for Idol to withdraw. He started at $10,000 and kept raising the stakes to $60,000. The crowd yelled to Idol on every offer, "Higher, higher!" (I yelled, "Freeze, freeze" and Scott Hudson hollered, "Take the box!") Eddie then bashed Idol with his attache case and Idol sold a full 3:30 until he rallied to wrap Eddie around a ringpost and clamped on the figure-4. Sam Lowe threw in the towel for Eddie at 4:20. DRAW-PLUS.

LAWLER D. FUNK (DQ): Worth the money but so late it didn't have as much heat as it would have earlier. Funk attacked Lawler outside and nearly cloned his Ric Flair ambush, using a mike cable, chairs and fencepost. Frank Morrell was slower than Bronco Lubich counting Funk's pins. After a Lawler rally, Funk piledrove Morrell and a second ref who looked like Paul Heyman Sr. (older and fatter). Gilbert ran in as heel ref, then he & Terry piledrove Jerry but Morrell saw it to call the DQ at 9:41. POWERSLAM.

QUARTERFINALS

LAWLER D. DICK SLATER: Slater worked on the arm early and scored a 2 3/4 with a neckbreaker. He failed on two piledriver tries but tried the Flair leg-on-ropes finish but Lawler kicked out. Lawler rallied but Dick tossed him into Morrell. After a double crash, Slater scored a back suplex but the George Scott finish saw Lawler lift his shoulder while Slater's stayed down on 3. Time: 9:17. DRAW.

FUNK D. DICK MURDOCH (DQ): Murdoch worked on Terry's leg early and Terry took some nasty head bumps. Funk busted up the ring steps and then the two Texas hunting buddies traded blows outside. With Paul Heyman Sr. distracted, Terry went for the branding iron but Murdoch stole it away. Heyman Sr., however, caught Dick trying to swing the iron at Terry and disqualified Murdoch at 6:16. RESTHOLD....no reaction to speak of for this.

(BYES): Gilbert, Idol.

ROAD TO MEMPHIS ROUNDUP

SECOND ROUND

LAWLER D. MARK CALLOUS (DQ): Mark started with two stiff clotheslines and Lawler returned one on the third try. Mark continued with a powerslam and high, high legdrop plus a high knee to the face. Lawler dropped the strap at 6:22 and after a rally, Mark decked Calhoun then accidentally creamed Downtown Bruno. Calhoun called for the DQ at 7:05. Mark posted and butted Lawler after and carried Bruno away. DRAW-PLUS.

SLATER D. JEFF GAYLORD: Worst finish of the show. Slater attacked Gaylord early and Jeff rallied for the worst miss of a headscissors in wrestling history. Gaylord missed a knee at 3:50. The two rolled on the mat and Gaylord simply laid down for the pin with no finishing setup at 4:12. BOMB.

GILBERT D. JARRETT (Coin Flip): Early brawl and mat moves that resembled Jeannie-Toni Adams fight. Good chain wrestling with chants of "Eddie, Eddie!" Good but not great because the two are saving some for later. Time limit at 10:06. Eddie won coin flip & Jeff decked him & Sam Lowe after. DRAW-PLUS.

IDOL D. JOHN TATUM: Tatum jumped Austin in the aisle and they brawled too much out of the lights, which will probably look horrible on TV. Idol finally crotch-punched Tatum at 3:30, then railed John and bashed him with a steel ash can. Austin got the win at 6:17 with the Flair rope trick. DRAW.

FUNK D. STEVE KEIRN: Terry beat the ring attendant with a towel & Keirn rejected Terry's offer for Steve to forfeit the match early. Funk brawled and Keirn sold like crazy for four minutes until Steve scored 2 DDTs which sent Terry out. Funk escaped a Keirn figure-4 at 5:38. Steve tried to reapply it but Terry scored the fall with the Flair-Sting small package finish at 7:18. Keirn battered Funk's leg after. DRAW-PLUS.

BYE: Murdoch.

FIRST ROUND

CALLOUS D. BILL DUNDEE: The opener was supposed to go 8 minutes and only went 3:36. Mark won by countout with the help of Bruno but Dundee decked and chaired Bruno after. RESTHOLD.

SLATER D. DANNY DAVIS: Davis scored with an early dropkick and suplex but Slater countered with a neckbreaker. Dick won in 3:32 when he reversed a whip into a clothesline. RESTHOLD.

GAYLORD D. DOUG GILBERT: Gaylord's early dropkick was followed by Doug's poor man's version of the Ric Flair over-turnbuckle flip. Jeff won in 4:40 with a reversal of a small package try by Doug. RESTHOLD-PLUS.

GILBERT D. JIMMY VALIANT: Mostly comedy. No lockup for 2:52. Eddie won in 6:33 when Lowe tripped Boogie. BOMB-PLUS.

JARRETT D. ABDUL HUSSEIN: Lots of early Jarrett clotheslines, then restholds. Mid-match grew boring. When Hussein spit on Jeff, Jarrett cranked it up and won with a backslide at 8:30. Jeff clotheslined Abdul and unnamed manager. RESTHOLD.

TATUM D. KING COBRA: Paul Heyman Sr. reffed for the first time here. Fingerpointing & shoving led to fan yelling, "Quit shovin' and rassle." Bad part: Tatum sold a missed punch by Cobra and didn't sell real punch. Tatum won in 5:55 with the Norman crash from a sunset flip try. BOMB-PLUS.

IDOL D. GARY YOUNG: Didn't lock up for 2:40 after arguing on house mike. Idol railed him twice but Gary rallied. Austin won by snatching a domestic object from Young (which Morrell clearly saw) and decking him in 7:42. RESTHOLD.

FUNK D. BRICKHOUSE BROWN: Terry got a big face reax but it turned quickly when he spit in Brick's face. It went in the stands and into the crowd. Terry threw Brick into the TV table and tried to elbow Pedicino. Brick finally reversed a piledriver and Terry was railed and cocobutted by Brick. A cocobutt off the top sent Terry into a Curly Howard spin. But Funk rallied to win it in 6:44 by reversing Brick's dive off the top into a package (holding trunks). DRAW-PLUS.

KEIRN D. TONY ANTHONY: Probably the best pure wrestling match of the night. Many stiff forearms and clotheslines by both. Both had good offensive spurts. Keirn once bit Tony on the nose and followed with a DDT. Steve won it in 10:30 by reversing a cross body block by Tony. POWERSLAM-PLUS.

MURDOCH D. SAMURAI: This one was Japanese-style and Murdoch actually showed some spunk here. He did a kip-up and a dropkick and followed with an enzuguiri. The finish came at 9:25 when Tojo Yamamoto threw salt but Dick ducked and Sam took the salt for the loss. Sam & Tojo almost come to blows after. DRAW.

MEMPHIS MUTTERINGS

This was a well-produced show and is probably largely going to look fine on TV but it was two hours too long. It began at 7:07 p.m. and ended at 12:22 a.m. The fans simply ran out of gas around 11....Surprise of the evening: WWF's Sapphire bought a ticket and sat in the row behind us. She seemed to have a good time but fell asleep during Idol-Tatum. No one knows why she came....Funk was an absolute tour de force but in the dressing room, he was saying, "FIIIIVE TIMES! Do you realize I've been out there FIIIIVE TIMES?" ....Terry may well do some USWA shows when Jarrett gets back in the Sportatorium....Scott Hudson and Steve Prazak of Atlanta made the trip as did Boni Blackstone.

The first two hours of tapings were like Monday Night Wrestling with Craig Johnson, Dave Brown and Joe Pedicino as a three-in-booth combo. I'm told it's two of the best hours of commentary you'll hear....Dave had to leave to do his late weather on WMC after Hour 2. Hour 3 saw The Wrestling Deejay join Craig and Joe, who did the final two hours as a twosome. ...Johnson has become the richest find among announcers this year and is already getting a big following with the fans. Craig has a sincere touch with the people which will carry him a long way....Eddie's been wanting to use a game-show gimmick for weeks and it really perked up the tired crowd. ...Callous looked better than he ever did in the NWA and his match with Lawler really showed off his power. Don't know why they stuck him with Bruno....For the record, after supper/breakfast at the Kettle downtown, we arrived back in Jackson at 3:45 a.m. Don't do that to us again, Eddie. FSB.

TV TEMPO

Oct. 8-14

(WWF/NBC) - [SNME/OKTOBERFEST]: {6-MAN} Legion of Doom/Ultimate Warrior d. Demolition when Ult pins Smash; Tugboat/Hulk Hogan d. Rhythm & Blues when Honky Tonk Man hits Tug w. guitar. Dino Bravo/Earthquake Tenta run in, destroy Tug, pound on Hulk. 'Quake splashes Hogan & tries for 2 but Tug recovers & cleans house. Hogan slams 'Quake; Randy Savage d. Dusty Rhodes by countout (PRE-MATCH ANGLE) Ted DiBiase/Virgil pay fans for ringside seats on either side of Dustin Rhodes. Dustin decks Ted & they brawl. Dusty tries to save but he & Dustin chaired by Ted/Virg/Randy. Dustin juices heavy; Kerry Von Erich d. Haku; Sgt. Slaughter d. Koko B. Ware. DRAW.

(WWF/USA) - [PRIME TIME]: Bushwhackers d. Barry Hardy/Dusty Wolfe; Earthquake d. Tom Bennett; Akeem d. Scott Colton; Jim Duggan d. Paul Diamond; Koko d. Brooklyn Brawler; Slaughter d. Ronnie Garvin; Curt Hennig d. Red Tyler; L.O.D. d. Tony Burton/Mike Shelton; Power & Glory d. Jim Brunzell/Brad Cramer; Dino Bravo d. Nikolai Volkoff by DQ. BOMB-PLUS.
[ALL-AMERICAN]: Hennig d. Jim Evans; Rhodes d. Diamond; Bravo d. Kreuger; Power & Glory d. Brunzell/Cramer; Bossman d. Tom Stone; Other winner: Lanny Poffo. BOMB-PLUS.

(WWF/SYND.) - [CHALLENGE]: 'Whackers d. Tom Stone/Black Demon; Akeem d. Colton; Battlecat d. Bradley; R&B d. W.T. Jones/Reno Riggins; Hennig d. Tyler; 'Quake d. Bennett; L.O.D. d. Burton/Shelton. RESTHOLD.
[SUPERSTARS]: Duggan d. Diamond; Barbarian d. Kent Carlson; Orient Express d. Ronnie Garvin/Mark Yates; Sama Simba d. Black Bart; Rhodes d. Al Burke; (BRO. LUV) Ult makes Bro. LUV put on blonde wig & dress, turning him into Sister Love, giving Randy Savage new dress to hide behind. RESTHOLD.

(LUCHA LIBRE) - Los Hermanas Dinamita d. El Rayo de Jalisco Jr./Sangre Chicana/Lizmark 2-3; El Satanico/Kung Fu/Emilio Charles Jr. d. Octagon/Atlantis/El Dandy 2-3; Mando Guerrero/Anibal/El Faraon d. El Gran Markus Jr./Pierroth Jr./Pirata Morgan 2-3; Javier Llanes/Jaque Mate/El Hijo del Gladiador d. El Volador/Super Muneco/El Misterioso 2-3; El Supremo/Bestia Salvaje d. Los Hermanos Dantes 2-3. POWERSLAM.

(NWA/SYND.) - [WORLD WIDE]: Juicer d. Chuck Coates; Scott Steiner d. Bill Ford; DOOM d. Tommy Angel/Brett Holliday; Renegade Warriors d. Barry Horowitz/Tony Burton; Sid Vicious d. Greg Sawyer; Nasty Boys d. Pablo Crenshaw/Scott Allen. BOMB-PLUS.
[NWA PRO]: Terry Taylor d. Italian Stallion; Steiners d. Horowitz/Hassan Farouk; State Patrol (2 straight) d. Sawyer/Mark White; Renegades d. Jeff Stone/Brian Carr; Tom Zenk d. J.W. Storm by DQ; Midnight Express d. Powerhouse Parker/Riggins; (DANGER ZONE) Paul E. w. Lex Luger. RESTHOLD.

(PRO WRESTLING '90) - Steve Lawler d. Randy Rose; (From UCW) Clark/Christy d. Heath/Bieles; (CLASSIC) Wendell Cooley d. Jerry Stubbs; Hurricane Walker d. Jim Bryant; (INTL) Tatsumi Fujinami/Hiroshi Hase d. Von Erichs; Jim Powell d. Terrorist; Fabian d. Mad Dog. RESTHOLD.

(USWA/SYND.) - [CHALLENGE]: Steve Austin d. Jimmy James; Jeff Jarrett d. Bubba Fangman; Angel of Death d. Chris Germany; John Tatum d. Barry Usher; Steve Dane d. Dog of War; (14-MAN BATTLE ROYAL) Jerry Lawler wins. RESTHOLD.
[BEST OF CHAMPIONSHIP]: Abdul Hussein d. Joey Maggs; (VIDEO) Austin Idol; Danny Davis d. Lou Fabiano; Jarrett-Eddie Gilbert brawl/pullapart & Jeff juices; Bill Dundee d. Samurai by DQ; (USWA TAG TITLE) Tony Anthony/Doug Gilbert d. Gaylord/Jarrett to win belts when Eddie (hidden under ring) holds Jeff's leg & Jarrett is counted out. DRAW-PLUS.

SCALE: PINFALL! - Must See. PILEDRIVER - Excellent. POWERSLAM - Good. DRAW - Average. RESTHOLD - Fair. BOMB - Poor. PLUS - Midscale rating.

(ICW) - Barry & Kendall Windham d. Jack Hart/Minelli; (SOUTHERN TITLE) Lex Luger d. Wahoo McDaniel; Kevin Sullivan/Bob Roop d. Lane/Ernco; Chief Slyunghold d. Eddie Miranda; Bob Backlund d. Johnny Rodz; Hollywood Blondes d. Kahlua/Reed; (ICW TITLE/5th rerun) Vic Steamboat d. Tony Atlas. BOMB.

(LPWA) - [Syndication]: Despina Montanages d. Denise Storm; Magnificent Mimi d. Sindee Paradise; Nasty Girls d. Heidi Lee Morgan/Misty Blue Simmes by DQ. BOMB-PLUS.
[Cable]: Bambi d. Nasty Kat LeRoux; Nasty Linda Dallas d. Denise Storm; Reggie Bennett/Shelly Francis d. Judy Martin/Lelani Kai by DQ. RESTHOLD.

(UWF) - Cactus Jack Manson d. Davey (The Observer) Meltzer; Danny Spivey d. Scott Cole; Paul Orndorff d. Black Knight (Billy Anderson); Steve Williams d. Larry Lennon; David Sammartino d. Houdini; (CAPTAIN'S CORNER) Lou Albano w. Spivey; B. Brian Blair d. Spitball Patterson but Spivey runs in after & destroys Blair; Billy Jack Haynes double countout vs. Col. DeBeers. RESTHOLD-PLUS.

(NWA/TBS) - [POWER HOUR]: Taylor d. Carr; Southern Boys d. State Patrol; (NWA TV TITLE) Arn Anderson d. Tim Horner; (WNN) Rerun of Gordon Solie's Black Scorpion interview & Sting response; (LOUISVILLE SLUGGER) Cornette considers selling his Four Horsemen videotapes to Theodore R. Long; Dutch Mantel d. Joe Barrett; (REPLAY) Sid Vicious attack on Sting at Chicago; Samoan Swat Team d. Rick Ford/White; (SEGMENT) Ross w. Curtis & Lisa Sliwa on Guardian Angels; (CLIP) DOOM-Flair/Arn angles; (SEGMENT) Diamond Jim Brady tells Ross Paul E.'s father paid to have Paul protected by Brady as a child. RESTHOLD-PLUS.
[WCW]: (Key Match) {U.S. TAG TITLE} Steiners d. Midnight Express; (WRAPUP) Updates on Sting-Scorpion, DOOM-Flair/Arn; Juicer d. Jeff Stone; Nasty Boys d. Barrett/Hart; Tom Zenk d. Bill Ford; Moondog Rex d. Tommy Rich; Taylor d. Coates; Storm d. John Peterson; Horner d. Carr; (DANGER ZONE) Paul E. w. Sid; S. Boys d. Death Row/Hassan Farouk; Rock & Roll Express d. Ring Lords; Renegades d. State Patrol. RESTHOLD.
[MAIN EVENT]: (U.S. TITLE) Lex Luger d. Rex; Flair/Arn d. R&R Ex. DRAW.

(WINDY CITY) - Untouchables d. Joe Knuckles/Cool Hand Luke; (REPLAYS) Frank Nelson d. Col. DeBeers by DQ; Larry Cameron d. Pancho Avila; Casey Knight d. Mike Sampson. DOUBLE BOMB!

(USWA/WMC) - Danny Davis/Joey Maggs d. Twilight Zone; (USWA TOP 10) Rankings established a la NWA w. Bam Bam Bigelow (9) and Steve Williams (8) new names; (REPLAYS) Jarrett-Gilbert brawl/pullapart; Anthony/Doug Gilbert d. Jarrett/Gaylord to win tag belts; (ANGLE) Sam Lowe insults Jeff, who decks Sam.

But Memphis Mafia jumps Jeff 4-on-1 and Eddie applies figure-4 for "injury" to allow Jeff to go to Japan; (6-MAN) Internationals/Lou Fabiano d. Gaylord/Ken Raper/Todd Johnson & keep beating after. Maggs tries to save & gets creamed until Davis, Dundee save; (From MID-SOUTH) Lawler d. Austin Idol to regain USWA title & post-match brawl w. Idol/Funk/Eddie; (ANGLE) While Dundee on phone w. Lawler, Gilberts/Anthony attack Bill, Eddie tries to apply figure-4 but Davis/Gaylord chase them off; Davis/Brickhouse Brown d. Doug Gilbert/Anthony in 49 seconds. POWERSLAM.

LINES OF THE WEEK

1. Jim Ross, NME: "If there was a category on JEOPARDY! for Late-Night Pizza Delivery Places, Jim Cornette would be the champion." 2. Missy Hyatt, NME: "I asked Cornette for the phone number of a pizza place in Pocatello, Idaho, and he knew it." 3. Scott Hudson, USWA tourney: "The only wrestler who ought to be called Gay Lord is Dino Bravo." 4. Paul E. Dangerously, PH, on Curtis & Lisa Sliwa: "What I love is people who go through life beating up people for no reason at all." 5. Craig Johnson, USWA: "Good thing we call Steven Dane sensational instead of great. Get it? Great Dane vs. The Dog of War." 6. Tojo Yamamoto, WMC: "Gilbert, he look retarded. Dirty White Boy, he look like septic tank. And manager---she not smart. She look like retarded sparrow bird." 7. Ross to Paul E., PH: "You're to wrestling journalism what Jimmy Olsen was to the Daily Planet. You're a cub reporter." 8. Roddy Piper, SNME, on Macho King: "I know lots of kings. There's Martin Luther King. Don King. Larry King. I've even got a king in my house. Here, King." 9. Joe Pedicino/Boni Blackstone, Kettle Restaurant, on Kim (Dirty White Girl) Anthony: (JP) "I admit it. I stole the line. I say on the air, 'She's definitely a candidate for TWIN PEAKS." (BB) "Joe, she's as flat as any woman in wrestling." 10. Paul E./Ross, PH: (PED) "I have seen the light!" (JR) "All you need is a tent and you can start holding revivals." 11. Piper, SNME, on Dusty to McMahon: "You love this guy, don't you? Because you love 'dem polka-dots." 12. Paul E., PH, on Solie-Scorpion: "Gordon Solie is 198 years old. He's ready for Social Security and if he ever steals one of my scoops again, I'm gonna put him on it."

QUESTIONS OF THE WEEK - 1. Hawk, SNME: "What are you gonna do? Cry in your beer? Sob in your schnitzel? Or whimper in your wienie?" 2. Missy Hyatt, NME, on J.W. Storm: "Is that ponytail real, or is it a clip-on?" 3. Paul E., PH: "I'm 25 years old. Why didn't I get that interview with the Black Scorpion?" 4. Piper, SNME: "How'd you like to get Scary Sherri out of the Patriots' locker room?"

STRONGEST COMMENTS - 1. Paul E., PH: "Have you seen Missy Hyatt driving around in her new Corvette? It must be nice being in the front seat for a change." 2. Lisa Sliwa, PH: "To be a man or to be a woman is not about hurting people. It's about helping people." 3. Diamond Jim Brady, PH, on Paul E.: "The old man had to pay me big bucks to protect him from everybody who wanted to kill him." 4. Piper, SNME, on Sherri's rear: "That's the best side of Sherri I've seen."

NICKNAMES OF THE WEEK - 1. MODERN-DAY EINSTEIN (Paul E. on himself). 2. EDDIE GILBERT STOOGE (Jarrett on Sam Lowe).

IMPERSONATION OF THE WEEK - Ross, PH, doing Gordon Solie: "...if you will."

ALL-CLICHE TEAM - Sting, PH: "...fight fire with fire."

BLOOPER AWARD - Jim Cornette, LOUISVILLE SLUGGER: "We had problems with the Four Horsemen a couple of years ago. We beat them for the world tag team title. But that was two different Horsemen." (Corny, it was one different Horseman. You did beat Arn as part of Arn & Tully).

BOO AWARD - ICW. Lex Luger vs. Wahoo McDaniel? A fifth rerun of Steamboat-Atlas? Come on, guys.

TUBE TALK

POWER HOUR will not move to Saturday morning until Nov. 3 but still at last week's announced 9:05 a.m. (ET). PH preempted Friday...One reason NWA PRO occasionally gets a more competitive match than WORLD WIDE is because it's shown on the two superstations....I'm told the Davey (The Observer) Meltzer character will disappear from the UWF TV shows. Bruno Sammartino reportedly told Herb Abrams it had no place on the show....Cactus Jack over big at second UWF show. When he came out, ringsiders yelled, "Ole sux!"

WWF drew 1,600 at the Omni on the 7th. NWA drew 2,200 Sunday night ...At NWA show in Melbourne FL Thursday night, near-sellout of 1,500 was told Midnight Express had won the U.S. tag title "Monday night in St. Louis." M Ex came to the ring with belts & Steiners beat them to set off phony title-change celebration.....TV GUIDE listed another AWA outing for this past Monday but it was a rerun, if it indeed aired.

RATINGS RAP

WWF TOPS SYNDIE; USA NUMBERS NOT AVAILABLE

After several weeks of delays in getting syndication ratings, the week ending Sept. 30 showed the WWF in its customary top spot by a 3-to-2 margin over the NWA but both organizations have lost 15 or more stations over last year.

The WWF scored is listing 243 stations, down 16 stations from its previous high of 259. The NWA's WRESTLING NETWORK is on 161, down from last year's top of 176.

In cable ratings, computer problems delayed the USA totals for the two WWF shows. The complete numbers will be available next week. In the NWA, boosted by a strong lead-in from a Chuck Norris movie, POWER HOUR scored a huge comeback with a 2.1 rating, up 75% from the week before.

CABLE

Week Ending Oct. 8	Rating	Share	Total Homes
NWA WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP (TBS 10/6)	2.8	6.5	1.57 million
NWA POWER HOUR (TBS 10/5)	2.1	3.8	1.18 million
NWA MAIN EVENT (TBS 10/7)	2.1	4.2	1.18 million
NWA POWER HOUR (R) (TBS 10/6)	0.8	6.2	448,000

SYNDICATION

Week Ending Sept. 30	Rating	Stations	Pct. U.S.
WWF	8.2	243	97%
NWA	5.4	161	94%

Bitter Words Exchanged

RUDE, ROBERTS OUT; WWF FACES CASH FLOW WOES, DEPARTURES

SPRINGFIELD MO----Rick Rude has reportedly quit the World Wrestling Federation, Jake Roberts is said to be giving notice and as many as 17 Titan Sports wrestlers will either leave or be dropped from the company after the weakest summer financially for the WWF since 1985. Titan's cash flow woes came to a head in a controversial and meeting between owner Vince McMahon Jr. and his wrestlers before television tapings here last Tuesday.

MATWATCH has learned a number of younger WWF performers were openly vocal in the meeting in challenging the direction of the promotion but McMahon as much as told them if they didn't like his rules, they could leave.

Several sources close to the promotion have told MATWATCH morale is at an all-time low in Titan. Said one: "If you think it's bad in the NWA, you ought to see what it's like on the road here."

Among the promotion's recent controversies:

***CASH FLOW SITUATION: Titan Sports is still a strongly capitalized company but the sharply declining crowds have created a serious cash flow problem. Payoffs are said to be at the lowest level since Titan's move to a national promotion. One WWF source told us some performers, after expenses, are clearing only $150-a-week.

***RUDE DEPARTURE: Initial reports were that Rude, discontent over his SUMMER SLAM payoff, had complained to McMahon and Vince had told him to go home until he cooled off. But Rude had had enough and walked. Sources close to Titan say the split is bitter and if not settled, Rude---who has an extended period to run on his WWF contract---will face an injunction blocking him from working for the NWA or any other group.

***DEMOLITION CHANGE: The three-time WWF tag champs are said to be livid over a McMahon decision to mask them. McMahon's belief is Demo is still too popular, even in a heel role, and the fan reax is preventing the Road Warriors (Legion of Doom) from getting over. Vince is said to have a strong commitment to getting the L.O.D. over, in the wake of the Ultimate Warrior's failure to light a Hoganesque fire as champion. Bill Eadie is reportedly irate over the situation. The Ax character is likely to be faded out after January but Eadie is expected to be offered a front office job as appeasement.

***McMAHON'S BODYBUILDING VENTURE: Some insiders believe that while Titan legitimately has cash flow troubles, McMahon may be exaggerating the situation to withhold revenue for startup costs for his new World Bodybuilding Federation. Some analysts outside the WWF believe McMahon will attempt to cross-promote between the WWF and WBF and develop symbiotic characters. But others harbor serious doubts McMahon can do nationally for bodybuilding what he did for pro wrestling.

MATWATCH has learned as many as 17 wrestlers will be out by January. Among the others MATWATCH has been told are going, other than Rude and Roberts, are Honky Tonk Man (Wayne Farris), Greg Valentine, possibly Demolition's Barry Darsow and Brian Adams, Bobby Heenan and one unconfirmed report has Randy Savage departing. But no cuts will take effect, other than Rude's, until after SURVIVOR SERIES Thanksgiving night. McMahon is expected to reduce to a roster of approximately 40 and may cut back on some of his 300-employee office staff.

Simultaneously, we have been told five new performers will be added between now and January, though the only one confirmed is Mark Callous, who sources say will debut as The Eggman (in connection with the huge egg being shown on TV as a link to SURVIVOR SERIES). Akio Sato is said to be headed to Japan to aid in re-establishing a WWF trade arrangment with one of the Oriental groups.

Already reported were plans to cut back to two shows per night to reduce travel costs. Stories are leaking within the industry about the possibility of Titan castoffs going to the NWA. In a phone conversation last week, NWA senior vice president Jim Herd refused comment on talent negotiations. One source close to the situation said, "No one leaving---other than Rude---can help them and they won't get Rude."

No talk surfaced of replacing Ultimate Warrior (Jim Hellwig) as WWF champion, largely because of no strong babyface other than Hulk Hogan, who is no longer available on a full-time basis, capable of drawing any more than Hellwig is.

While no specific figures are available, crowds have been down an estimated 30 to 55 per cent in some key WWF venues, with only Los Angeles and the California Bay area coming close to legitimate sellouts. Merchandising revenue is also down and uncertainty exists within Titan of how wrestling may be affected by the sharp downturn in the U.S. economy.

With neither SURVIVORS or the January ROYAL RUMBLE expected to do monster pay-per-view numbers, the WWF is hanging its hopes on being able to limp along until next spring's WRESTLEMANIA VII. But as one independent analyst told MATWATCH, "We may bave reached the period we all were afraid would happen. The whole country appears to be tired of wrestling and not even the WWF is immune."

HEENAN ON THE ROAD: Bobby Heenan will be "replace" Rick Rude around the horn against Bossman but won't actually work. He'll wear a phony cast in an "injury" angle.

I FIRED THE SAMOANS: Jim Herd informed me last Monday he personally fired the Samoan Swat Team but agreed to give them a couple of TV wins and, in Herd's words, that's why they were still working the last two weeks at tapings.

MORE ON SST: Herd's story on the firings..."They used some extremely offensive language and gestures at some of our fans and we had a number of letters and phone calls complaining about them. I'm not going to have that."

CROCKETT CUP?: Jim Crockett, still a minority owner of the NWA, is said to be pushing heavily for changes, including removing Jim Ross and Tony Schiavone as producers (and having them strictly announce), and hiring an experienced TV producer take over the shows. No commitment from WCW.

AND ON TV: Herd issued an outright denial any ill will exists from WPIX and WGN on their syndicated shows.

TALENT MOVE: You'll be hearing a lot of talk about a number of the WWF wrestlers on the chopping block headed into the NWA but, remember, fewer and fewer people are being offered contracts with Turner.

PIPER TO RETURN: Roddy Piper will probably return to the ring full-time in the WWF in January with an eventual program with Curt Hennig on the agenda.

ANOTHER ADD-ON: Curtis Hughes is apparently headed into the NWA. He has shown promise with several indie groups.

THE DEMOLITION STORY: Vince also intends to eliminate all semblances of ring music with Demolition. The fear is if the L.O.D. doesn't get a major reax, Joe and Mike might bolt.

NO BARRY: Barry Windham is not on any current November cards for the NWA, fueling speculation that he will not return to the group.

TERRY'S SORE: Terry Funk reportedly extremely sore after his five-match night at the USWA tournament. Terry has indicated to friends he won't rule out a return to the NWA (he has been pitched a chance to do FUNK'S GRILL again and some other things) but not as long as Ole Anderson is booker.

SHANE SURVIVES: One known survivor of the WWF cuts is Shane Douglas. Titan is apparently high on his future and has been impressed with his card-opening efforts.

HE'S NOT DEAD: The long-rumored dead Dr. Jerry Graham was very much alive and working at an L.A. indie card two weeks ago and bled like the proverbial stuffed pig.

WILL THE REAL?: Craig Johnson should send a tape to Mark Goodson. A rival game show company has won an injunction to block TO TELL THE TRUTH host Gordon Elliott from continuing with the series. Craig has a similar look and personality to Elliott (if not an Australian accent) and is as big a game show nut as I. And I think he'd be terrific in the role.

MATWATCHING

IT'S "NOT TRUE, EITHER": Though reports continue to surface to the contrary within the industry, Herd says it is "absolutely not true" the NWA wants to evolve into a cheaper-talent group. We've learned, however, that suggestions have been made to other entities within TBS that the 5 rating for CLASH XII was indicative the group doesn't need excessive high-priced talent to draw big TV audiences.

JUICERMANIA: Say what you will about his personal situation in Portland but Art Barr is one fresh act getting over as The Juicer. Tuesday night at the return to The Center Stage, 30 parents came to event coordinator Chip Burnham wanting to know how their kids could get in that night's Juice Patrol.

GOOD SALES: Half of ringside already is sold for the TOM ROBINSON BENEFIT EXTRAVAGANZA Nov. 9 in the Philly area. We'll have an update from promoter Dennis Coraluzzo and next week. Joel Goodhart is also working with him on the show.

SIDE NOTE: Only McMahon himself was said to know, prior to air time, whether NBC was going to allow Dustin Rhodes' juice to be shown on SATURDAY NIGHT'S MAIN EVENT. Insiders certainly wanted it to be, thinking it may be a shot-in-the-arm angle for the group.

HOW SOON?: Speculation in Memphis was that the final straw would come for Kevin Von Erich's revived WORLD CLASS group in the Sportatorium within two weeks and Jerry Jarrett would have USWA back in Dallas by the first Friday in November.

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